

own. Now, before this plan to cut our spending and balance our budget is demagogued, let me tell you exactly how this thing works:

This plan makes no changes to Social Security and Medicare. This plan makes no changes to the veterans' spending. This plan will cut spending by \$111 billion in fiscal year 2012.

We must use this debate as an opportunity to bring real change to Washington and to start paying down our debt. If you believe that cutting spending and providing a way forward for a balanced budget are commonsense ideas, vote for this legislation.

CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE WASHINGTON'S CHECKBOOK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, I am here to share a short letter I received from one of my constituents who used to own a small business. His name is Steve, and his letter eloquently addresses the issue we are discussing today.

Steve wrote: "I know it is a very contentious time in Washington. The 2008 election led me to sell my business because I saw an assault on the small business owner. My peers continue to ask me how I anticipated our current situation.

"First, it was the mandated health insurance, then more government regulation and regulators, and now it is the assault on my earnings that I worked hard for over the last 40 years.

"The President and his Progressive friends will not be satisfied until they kill what reward for risk incentive is left.

"Equal wealth for everyone is not guaranteed in our Constitution.

"The reward for risk is what made this country what it is today.

"I ask that you hold the line even if it means losing the next election."

I came to Congress to get Nevada's economy back on track, and the only way to do that is by listening to our job creators—by listening to their concerns and then addressing those very concerns. When I talk with Nevada's small business owners, they feel the same way Steve does. They say the reason they're not creating jobs is due to too many harmful regulations, too many taxes and too much government spending.

We are in a fiscal crisis, and it is killing our job creators' very ability to create jobs. In all of my conversations with Nevada business owners, the one thing—the one thing—I've never heard them say is, "Do you know what would help me create more jobs? A tax increase."

I urge Nevadans and my colleagues not to listen to the President's false choice—the idea that we can fix government's fiscal problems by merely closing loopholes and reining in subsidies. Now, let me be clear. I support closing loopholes and subsidies because

we need to level the playing field, but that won't by itself solve the problem, because even if we close the loopholes and rein in the subsidies, the government will still have a spending problem, and it will only be a matter of time before another tax increase is proposed.

Past all of the talking points and hyperbole, the President's real choice is about the tax burden families and businesses face in Nevada and across the country. Will that burden be lower or higher? I am fighting to make sure it's lower. Our job creators, like Steve, realize this. Why doesn't Congress? Forty-nine of 50 States balance their budgets. Why doesn't Congress? Nevada families live within their means. Why doesn't Congress?

Just because there are checks in the checkbook doesn't mean there is money in the checking account. The Cut, Cap, and Balance proposal is a thoughtful solution to solving the government's spending problem that protects the promise of Social Security and Medicare for seniors and veterans' benefits to our brave men and women who have fought to protect our freedoms. It will cut \$5.8 trillion over the next decade and give our job creators confidence that we are serious about getting this economy back on track.

I urge my colleagues to support the Cut, Cap, and Balance bill and show that we are serious about balancing Washington's checkbook.

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THE DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, as Americans, we face a challenge. The question yet to be answered is: Will we rise to be able to meet that challenge?

We can often hear in the debate on this floor something that happens at every Super Bowl at half time. It's called "kick, pass, and punt." We can kick each other around, we can pass on this problem in addressing it today, and we can punt to the next generation. But I think far more is expected of us.

The people who elected us, the people who sent us to this office, are seeking solutions and leadership to be able to deal with the true challenges that we all face at home.

Last night around dinner tables across our country, moms and dads were going over the family budget looking at how much it cost to fill up that gas tank, how they're going to meet that family budget to be able to put food on the table, to be able to keep a roof over their heads. They're spending within their means.

Forty-nine of our 50 States have one form or another of a balanced budget requirement meaning that, as States, they have to be able to live within their means. Surprisingly, only here in

Washington, D.C., in our Nation's capital, do we think there is this inexhaustible resource called the American taxpayers' hip pocket to be able to draw from so that government can grow. The constant argument, my friends, is government needs it more than the people at home. I don't think so. Come and walk my district. Look in the eyes of the people right now that are struggling to be able to keep that roof over the top of their heads.

We have that economic challenge. We face a debt in this country of \$14.4 trillion. Now, I don't know about you. I'm a small businessman. It's hard really to get your arms around just what is a million dollars, let alone a trillion dollars.

Well, if you're a basketball fan, you may have paid a little attention to this last season. LeBron James, arguably one of the best basketball players in the entire country, being paid \$40 million a year to be able to play basketball, well, if he wants to earn just \$1 trillion, we have to wish him very good health. He'll have to play basketball for 25,000 years to earn just \$1 trillion.

We've stacked up over \$14.4 trillion. The President has asked for a blank check to increase the debt of this country an additional 2 trillion-plus dollars.

Is the time now for fiscal responsibility in Washington? It is. We have to rise to be able to meet that challenge. Cut, cap, and balance, is that unreasonable? We can demonize it. We can say that Washington is above the rules of every American and the rules they have to be able to live with, or we can look to the people who we sent to Washington to stand up for us to live under the same constraints that we do in our individual lives.

If we've spent more than we've taken in, we have to be able to find ways to be able to cut back. We then also have to have that alternative to be able to restrain that spending and then to be able to balance the budget.

Unfortunately, yesterday the President said that it was going to be dead on arrival. I hope that our American citizenry will rise to this challenge. I have great hope that this Chamber will pass Cut, Cap, and Balance. But we need to let the Senate of the United States and the President of the United States know that we're going to be holding them accountable. Our future truly depends on it.

This is our time. This is our challenge. This is truly our opportunity. Let's put aside what is often referred to as just politics as usual. This is not a Democratic issue. This is not a Republican issue. This is an American issue.

I hope that our Members will join with me in seeking real solutions to real problems to deal with it so that the American people can look to a brighter future.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair